

**Application Number** 18/00321/LBC

**Proposal** Internal works, repairs, restoration and alterations of the Ashton Old Baths-Phase 3 Annex including new contemporary office accommodation (B1), coffee shop (A3) and a new internal Data centre (sui generis)

**Site** Ashton Old Baths, Stamford Street West, Ashton

**Applicant** TMBC

**Recommendation** Approve, subject to conditions,

**Reason for report** The application is presented to the Panel so that members have a complete picture of the current proposals at Ashton Old Baths.

## **REPORT**

### **1. APPLICATION DESCRIPTION**

- 1.1 The application is one of three concurrent applications appertaining to Ashton Old Baths and seeks listed building consent for internal works that are designed to facilitate the proposed change of use of what is known as the eastern annexe of the building to accommodate offices (use class B1), a coffee shop (use class A3) and a new internal data centre (sui generis use).
- 1.2 The proposed data centre is intended to host council, NHS and commercial computer systems in a controlled environment and comprise a single-storey, modular room within the annexe.
- 1.3 The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement: Significance and Impact.
- 1.4 The concurrent applications are:
- ref. 18/00194/FUL, seeking full planning permission for the change of use of section of Fleet Street from highway to service yard, including the installation of a 2.4m high metal louvred fence; and,
- ref. 18/00278/FUL, seeking full planning permission for the change of use of what is known as the eastern annexe of the building to accommodate offices (use class B1), a coffee shop (use class A3) and a new internal data centre (sui generis use with supporting sub-station and generator).

### **2. SITE & SURROUNDINGS**

- 2.1 Located on the south side of Henry Square, Ashton Old Baths is a grade II\* listed building situated in the town centre conservation area and is at the heart of the St Petersfield redevelopment scheme. The building sits on an island site bounded by Stamford Street West to the north, Fleet Street to the east and south, and Welbeck Street to the west. The A635 Park Parade town centre by-pass is situated parallel with Fleet Street to the south.
- 2.2 The building comprises the main former pool hall that now accommodates a free-standing office pod, and ancillary facilities (see paragraph 3.3) and an annexe on the eastern side that remains vacant and accommodated originally a smaller swimming bath for women and a number of private (slipper) baths together with the Turkish and hot air baths.

### **3. PLANNING HISTORY**

3.1 In order to address the decline of the area known now as St Petersfield, and the Old Baths, which is the landmark building, outline planning permission (ref. 02/01443/OUT) was granted initially in May 2003 for the comprehensive redevelopment of the area, and again, with some modifications (ref. 04/00040/OUT), in May 2004. The proposal was that the redevelopment would include a mix of uses, but primarily business uses, with an element of residential use, and ancillary retail uses so as to provide a new business quarter for the town. A Masterplan included with these applications envisaged the Old Baths having the potential to accommodate either an hotel or a business centre.

3.2 Prior to the evolution of the St Petersfield scheme, planning permission (ref. 80/00119/FUL) was granted to use the Old Baths for light industrial and storage accommodation. Confirmation of the lawfulness of the use of the building for light industrial, or business, use was issued (ref. 14/00381/CLUD) in May 2014.

3.3 More recently and significantly, in accordance with the authorized use of the building, listed building consent (ref. 14/00575/LBC) allowed for:

Phase 1 works, comprising external and internal works, repairs, and alterations to the former main pool hall including the erection of an internal free-standing structure; and,

Phase 2 works, comprising essential works to secure repairs to and the structural integrity of the remaining parts of the building.

3.4 The current applications comprise Phase 3 works to the building.

### **4. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES**

4.1 **Tameside Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Allocation**  
Allocated Development Opportunity Area within Ashton town centre conservation area

#### **4.2 Part 1 Policies**

1.11: Conserving Built Heritage and Retaining Local Identity

#### **4.3 Part 2 Policies**

C5: Alternative Uses, Alterations and Additions for Listed Buildings.

#### **4.4 Other Policies**

It is not considered there are any local finance considerations that are material to the application.

#### **4.5 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

Section 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

#### **4.6 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)**

This is intended to complement the NPPF and to provide a single resource for planning guidance, whilst rationalising and streamlining the material. Almost all previous planning

Circulars and advice notes have been cancelled. Specific reference will be made to the PPG or other national advice in the Analysis section of the report, where appropriate.

## **5. PUBLICITY CARRIED OUT**

- 5.1 The application has been advertised by means of neighbour notification letters dispatched on 9 May 2018 to 8 addresses in Portland Street South, Old Street, Stamford Street West, Welbeck Street South and Bentinck Street, and with a notice being posted at the site on 15 May 2018.

## **6. RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES**

- 6.1 Historic England support the re-use of the building and defer consideration of the application to the local planning authority.

## **7. SUMMARY OF THIRD PARTY RESPONSES RECEIVED**

- 7.1 No responses have been received.

## **8. ANALYSIS**

- 8.1 Ashton Old Baths is grade II\* listed. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that the primary duty of the local planning authority in relation to listed buildings is to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 8.2 The Old Baths had been derelict and in poor condition following closure of the pools in the late 1970s resulting in the building's inclusion within the English Heritage, Heritage at Risk Register – North West. Emergency works to make the building weather tight were undertaken in 2008 and following the successful implementation of Phase 1 and 2 works (see paragraph 3.3) the building was removed from the Heritage at Risk Register in 2017. The interior of the Annexe was not addressed at part of the Phase 1 and 2 works and consequently remains vacant.
- 8.3 The current proposals retain the original form and layout of the Annexe. Proposed works are to facilitate the change of use and rationalise and reconfigure the internal space and allow for natural daylight, including the removal of partition walls, which are not original features of the building, on both the ground and first floors.
- 8.4 Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that: Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 8.5 It is considered that the proposals respect the elements of the building that are of most significance and that are identified in the submitted Heritage Statement. These parts or elements of the building are deemed to be of particularly special interest and are fundamental to the understanding of the architectural design and play a major role in reflecting the historic and aesthetic value of the building. Examples of these elements, which would be retained or reinstated, are the existing lobby entrance, tiled women's baths room, roof lights, the cast iron

roof structure to the first floor, coved first floor ceilings, glazed tile walls and internal plan arrangement.

- 8.6 Given the above, for the purposes of assessment against the NPPF, it is considered that the proposals would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building as a heritage asset and that this harm would be majorly out-weighed by the public benefits that would accrue in securing an optimum, viable and sustainable new use for the remainder of the listed building. These benefits would not only be that the active use of the Annexe would result in its future maintenance, and thus the enhancement of both its appearance and the conservation area in which it is set but also, in building on the success of the completed Phase 1 and 2 works, act as a catalyst for further town centre investment. The proposals are therefore considered acceptable and compliant with Section 16 of the NPPF and policies 1.11 and C5.

## RECOMMENDATION

Grant listed building consent subject to the following conditions:

1. The works hereby permitted must begin not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.
2. The works hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and document refs:

SSL 7603:100:1:4  
SSL 7603:100:2:4  
SSL 7603:100:3:4 1 1  
SSL 7603:100:4:4  
SSL 7603A:100:1:1:ELV  
1064-201-00-LBC P1  
1064-02-00-LBC P2  
1064-02-01-LBC P2  
1064-203-00-LBC P4  
1064-203-01-LBC P3  
1064-203-02-LBC P2  
1064-203-03-LBC P2  
1064-204-01-LBC P3  
1064-204-02-LBC P3  
1064-205-101-LBC P2  
1064-205-102-LBC P3  
1064-205-103-LBC P3  
1064-231-00-LBC P2  
1064-231-01-LBC P2  
1064-231-10-LBC P2  
1064-231-11-LBC P2  
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1064-1807-00 P1

1064-1807-01 P1

Heritage Statement: Significance and Impact

- 3 Prior to installation full details or specification of the rooflights to be reinstated, as illustrated on plans ref. 1064 203 LBC P2, 1064 204 01 LBC P2 and 1064 205 103 LBC, shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with such approval.
- 4 Prior to installation full details or specification of the new window openings to be installed in rooms G5, G6 and F3, as illustrated on plans ref. 1064 203 00 LBC P4 and 1064 205 01 LBC P3, shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with such approval.
- 5 Prior to installation full details or specification of any mechanical and electrical services plant, referred to in the Heritage Statement: Significance and Impact, including any pipe work/flues/extractor fans shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with such approval.